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TAGS: PREL PREF PGOV KPKO OVIP IZ SY

SUBJECT: IRAQI FM ZEBARI MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR RICE

**¶11.** (SBU) Summary: During Ambassador Rice's September 28 meeting with Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari, he reiterated the Iraqi government request for U.S. support for a UN investigation into the August 19 Baghdad bombings and to move out of Chapter VII obligations. Zebari confirmed that Iraq would be satisfied with a senior UN official being sent to the region to look into foreign interference in Iraq. He also noted a series of productive meetings between Iraqi and Kuwaiti senior officials in New York, said Iraq is ready to move on Chapter VII issues prior to the January Presidential elections. End summary.

UN SENIOR OFFICIAL IS ACCEPTABLE

**¶12.** (C) FM Zebari opened the meeting discussing the "crisis" Iraq has experienced in its relations with Syria following the August 19 bombings. Following four rounds of talks with the Syrians via Arab League and Turkish interlocutors, Iraq sees no movement, saying Syrians are unwilling to "move one step". Zebari underscored that the Government of Iraq (GOI) has now explored all regional and bilateral interventions and their only hope is a senior UN official who can assess foreign interference in Iraq. Zebari called the Iraqi request "modest", saying it is not a fact-finding mission; not a tribunal. He likened the August 19 Baghdad bombings to the U.S. September 11, 2001 attacks, noting it was an "attack at the heart of the Iraqi government" which required international action.

**¶13.** (C) Ambassador Rice offered her sincerest condolences for those killed and injured in the August bombings. She informed Zebari that there had been no traction in the Security Council for an inquiry, per Iraq's initial request, and that as a result the U.S. government has worked closely with the UN to find an acceptable, alternative model. Ambassador Rice noted that she had discussed this issue with SYG Ban as recently as Saturday. While confirming that the U.S. government will continue to support Iraq's request that the UN send an official for an initial assessment, she urged Zebari to reiterate his message to the UN directly and forcefully during his remaining time in New York in light of UN concern about strong Syrian opposition.

**¶14.** (C) Zebari noted with pride that since making Iraq's displeasure with Syria public, the number of terrorist attacks in Iraq have decreased. And, he urged that we collectively "not squander this opportunity during the critical period leading to elections". Moments later Zebari noted that SYG Ban's response letter to PM Maliki's original request was "absolutely wrong; a dreadful mistake", since it mentioned Syria directly, publicly. As a result, Zebari has sent a response letter to SYG Ban confirming neither SRSG Melkert nor UNAMI can be a response to the GOI request for assistance.

CHAPTER VII ISSUES - POTENTIALLY POSITIVE MOVEMENT WITH KUWAIT

¶15. (C) Zebari noted a positive increase in communications between Iraq and Kuwait, highlighting Kuwait's help in receiving a number of wounded GOI ministry officials directly following the August 19 bombings. In New York last week, Iraq and Kuwait held a number of high level meetings, calling it a "good week" and a "change in psychology" for both countries. During these meetings, the Kuwaitis underscored their key requirement to the GOI: clear and unequivocal confirmation of their shared land and maritime borders. Zebari said, "we can move on this" and expects the GOI will write a letter to the Security Council to "reaffirm agreements". Zebari also noted Iraq can work on the border maintenance issue and missing persons and property issues, and hopes that the UN Compensation Fund allocation, currently at five percent of all oil revenues, can be decreased to one or two percent.

¶16. (SBU) Zebari requested U.S. support as Iraq seeks to move on a number of Chapter VII issues prior to the January Presidential elections. Ambassador Rice confirmed Iraq has the U.S. government's support in all Chapter VII issues and implored him to "help us help you". She passed, yet again, the non-paper to FM Zebari which outlines the necessary steps for Iraq to move on Chapter VII issues. (Comment: This non-paper had previously been passed to GOI in Baghdad and the Iraqi UN Mission in New York.)

RICE